



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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Date: April 12, 2007
For Immediate Release

P R E S S R E L E A S E

City Moves Forward With New Research Project to Document Historic Neighborhood

New Bedford, Massachusetts- In the spring of 2006, the City of New Bedford was awarded a survey and planning grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission that would fund the preparation of an amended nomination of the County Street National Register Historic District. The district was first named to the National Register in 1976 and is comprised of approximately 1,000 properties and 100 acres of land. The nomination form as currently written, places a nearly exclusive emphasis on the architecture of the district. The amended nomination will serve to document the social and ethnic diversity, history and development patterns of the district. No boundary changes are proposed and the project is scheduled for completion in July of this year.

The new information gained from this project will result in future interpretive and research opportunities such as exhibits, publications and special events. In addition, complete information will better inform neighborhood plans and will provide a better context for future growth and development strategies for the general public and community leaders directly involved in the individual neighborhoods that comprise the County Street district.

Many local community members and city councilors have approached the City of New Bedford, the National Park Service and their State and Federal delegation to express their desire to have this neighborhood's history more thoroughly documented. This project is a vital first step and will inform National Park Service efforts to conduct an Ethno-history/Ethnographic Study of the various ethnic groups that were involved in New Bedford's whaling history. Many of these groups lived in the neighborhoods surrounding the historical park including all areas of the County Street district.

Kathryn Grover was chosen as the lead consultant for this project based on her extensive expertise and knowledge of New Bedford history combined with her methodology and understanding of the community's needs. Ms. Grover has already begun the research and documentation of the district with emphasis placed on the neighborhoods within the district that provided the housing for the families who were involved in all aspects of the whaling industry. These neighborhoods represent a wide range of economic classes and ethnic backgrounds anchored by the Cape Verdean community.

Ms. Grover is a New Bedford resident that is well respected in the community and has completed successful National Historic Landmark applications for the National Park Service and the New Bedford Historical Society. Ms. Grover is also the author of *The Fugitive's Gibraltar*, a study of fugitive slave traffic in and around New Bedford.

The City of New Bedford is home to eleven historic districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places is a federal program administered by the National Park Service in partnership with state governments and is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. While conveying national recognition to a property, National Register listing is primarily honorary and carries no restrictions upon that property.

A public meeting will be scheduled later this year to present to the community the research and findings associated with the new nomination. If there are any questions in the meantime, those questions can be directed to the Preservation Planner, Anne Louro at 508-979-1488.

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